High Powered Committee Report on Soda Ash

955. SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the date on which the High powered Committee on soda ash was constituted, by when it was originally required to submit its report and when did it actually did so and what the reasons for extraordinary delay; if any;

(b) whether the sub-committee on cost, prices and import included exports too, if any, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the dissenting note given by the All India Silicate Manufacturers Association was appended to the report; if not, what are the reasons therefor and details thereof; and

(d) whether it is a fact that the report deals mainly with perception instead of an indepth and critical study about the soda ash problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF CHEMICALS AND PETRO-CHEMICALS IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI R. K. JAICHANDRA SINGH): (a) The High Powered Committee on Soda Ash, which was constituted on 27.6.1983, was expected to complete the task assigned to it and present its report within a period of three months from the first sitting of the Committee. However, the Committee's Report became ready in October, 1986 only. The delay occurred because of initial delay in the constitution of the Sub-Committees since the terms of reference and composition thereof entailed a detailed scrutiny and later on due to delay in the finalisation of their recommendations.

(b) The Sub-Committee on prices, cost-structure, import policy etc. comprised of only Government's experts in the field headed by the Chairman, Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices (BICP) so as to ensure not only confidentiality of the information furnished to it by the Soda Ash manufacturers but also its deliberations.

(c) Since the points contained in the dissenting note of the All India Silicate Manufacturers Association were discussed at length at various stages including the meeting of the High Powered Committee, it was not considered necessary to append it with the report of the High Powered Committee on Soda Ash.

(d) The report not only deals with the perception of the Industry but also with its present status, future growth, requirements and problems faced by the Industry.

Retrenchment of the Kahalgaon Thermal Power Station employees

956. SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a memorandum regarding retrenchment of nineteen workmen employees of Kahalgaon Thermal Power Station by NTPC; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what steps are being taken by Government for the reinstatement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI): (a) and (b) A representation regarding disengagement of nineteen persons working on casual basis at the Kahalgaon Super Thermal Power Project of the NTPC was received. These individuals were disengaged as, excepting one person, they did not fulfil the criteria, evolved in February, 1986, in consultation with the State Government, for recruitment of land-oustees on preferential basis. While there is no proposal to again recruit those